

*Inspiring Figuratives
for Artists*



*Two Hundred
Female Figuratives*

Volume Two

Inspiring Figuratives for Artists: Volume Two

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If you wish to sit for figurative photography here in Vancouver, or may want to submit your own figurative photographs, feel free to contact the editor of *Inspiring Figuratives for Artists* at

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Inspiring Figuratives for Artist series

The purpose of the *Inspiring Figurative for Artists* series is to provide study materials for the artists who are trying to master the human form. This book includes a mix of two hundred and fifty modern and vintage Female *Figuratives*.

As an artist I am particularly fond of the vintage *Figuratives*. Such works are not merely nostalgic; they also tend to be dramatic, reflecting the sensibilities of their era. Here is an excellent example of a dramatic vintage *Figurative* from the late 1920's.



As you study this *Figurative* what three aspects of this photograph do you find compelling?

In the first few decades of the twentieth century female *Figurative* art was caught in that dilemma between modesty and modernity. This all changed in the 1930's when a handful of artists like Picasso and Matisse made the *Figurative* an object of great beauty. This effort in fact had begun a half century before the 1930's with such art pieces as *Olympia*, but it usually takes a generation or two to transform societal sensibilities.

Perhaps everything hinges on the mystery of the female. Before you huff and puff and say this is a phrase created by 'male sensibilities,' let me invite you to read the works of Anais Nin. If you have never heard of her you have some catching up to do. She was in Paris when Picasso and Matisse made the *Figurative* an object of great beauty and she knew the two artists and understood what they had set out to do.

With the mystery of the female form it is possible to balance modernity with modesty, for feminine arousal can be simply hidden away. For a man that is not possible. The same metamorphosis between modernity and modesty still awaits the male form. Ah, what about Maplethorpe. He had his own motivations ... and they were not purely artistic.

The breasts on women are universally accepted as a purely feminine attribute as opposed to an overtly sexual attribute, no more so than in an artist's studio. Here is a snippet from the 1970's film *Circle of Two* starring Richard Burton and Tatum O'Neal which was filmed near Toronto Canada.

What do you first notice about the *Figurative*?



You see her face first, then the colourful painting next to her face, then her breasts ... then you notice her asymmetry. Her breasts are different shapes, and sizes and her areola are different shapes and sizes as well.

In this scene the portrayal of her film character is done in the same style as a Picasso or Matisse painting from the 1930's. Tatum O'Neal stands there before us ... but it is artistry we see or abject sexuality?

If you think she is not standing there *sans habillement* let me give you an out of focus snippet of her behind the chair.



And can you see what is in her hand? This is the wonderful nature of this *Figurative*. There is a narrative going on between the model and the artist.



Her punch line is “*are you wondering about the cigar? Without it I would be totally naked.*” This is Tatum O’Neal telling us that she is, in fact, standing before the artist as a *Figurative*!

The *Figurative* from *Circle of Two* was produced a half century after the dramatic vintage *Figurative* from the late 1920’s we looked at. Over those intervening five decades, as freedoms flourished in artistic expression, both modesty and modernity were tossed aside in the mad stampede to produce the pornographic. You might think this comment as being somewhat harsh, however let us at least agree as to the meaning of the term.

The term pornography draws its meaning from *porne* prostitute and *graphein* to display. The Oxford dictionary defines pornography as ‘the explicit description or exhibition of sexual subjects or activity ... in a manner intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic feeling.’

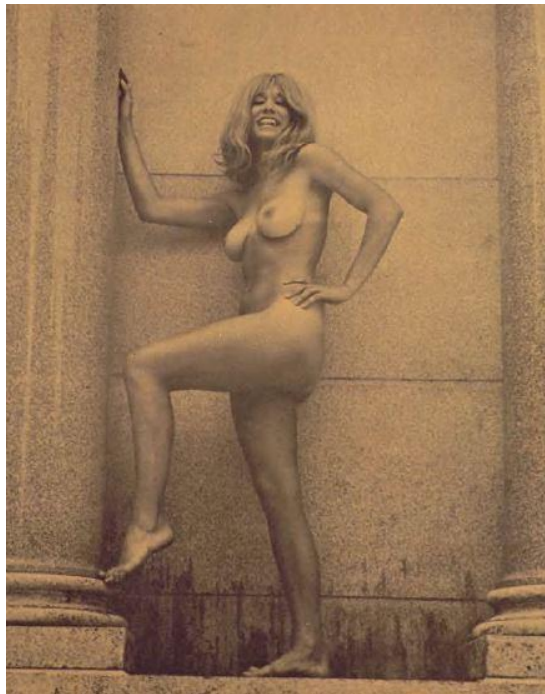
Here is another vintage *Figurative*. What sensibilities does it evoke in you?



Figuratives are by their very nature first and foremost aesthetic. If they also reflect other sensibilities so be it! As explained in book one of the *Inspiring Figuratives for Artists* series, a Figurative is in balance between an artist's model and their surroundings.

This balance is what you in fact see in the snippet from *Circle of Two*. That snippet was chosen from the very midst of the 1970's so that you could appreciate that the aesthetic is still possible even in the midst of the inane or the mundane.

Here is an example of a photograph from 1968 that is adrift between the aesthetics and the erotic:



This is clearly a 'click and point' moment and not a composed aesthetic. It is the edginess of the piece that tells us that. Notice her tan lines and the

distractions at her feet. She has not taken the time to tie back her hair, and she has a ‘look at me’ expression on her face.

This is the same model in a *Figurative*, done later that same day.



This *Figurative* has a narrative we are all familiar with ... “he loves me ... he loves me not!” The fact there are many flower petals laid about tells us of her indecisiveness. Her tan line is no longer that evident for it blends in with the colour of the white flower petals and the pink adds an aesthetic that is quite deliberate. The discerning eye may in fact notice an asymmetry ...

While the first photograph of this model is silly, this second piece is artwork that redeems both her and the artist.

We all know that the 1970's had its own angst. For instance, here is a spoof on a popular sun tan lotion:



But is this a *Figurative*? Can you think of three reasons why it could be and three others why it is not?

A *Figurative* is both a creative and conscious undertaking by the artist. Producing a Figurative drawing, painting, sculpture or photograph is very much like the great Parisian photographer Brassai composing his artwork within his camera. In our point and click digital world little composition goes on and as a result there are few truly aesthetic *Figuratives*. Brassai could

only afford an emulsion or two a week (yes he was that impoverished) and so he made every one of his photographs be meaningful.

We should approach our Figurative work in the same manner. We should try to set aesthetics front and center and so make each artwork have meaning.

There are a number of artist's models from the 1920's and 1930's who helped to define a modern *Figurative* art. Several such models are presented in this book: Clara Bow, Louise Brooks, Josephine Baker, Lee Miller and Suzi Wong.

There is a French film that came out two decades ago called *The Artist and the Model* that features a good understanding of the relationship between an artist and their model. Here are some snippets from this Film:



This pose is very much reminiscent of Henri Matisse.



You notice how the aesthetics is presented?



If I had not told you it was from a contemporary film would you have perhaps thought these were vintage *Figuratives*?

Yet these snippets are so beautifully crafted that you could well imagine them as being from the 1930's or forties. I presented these Figuratives in Black and White to help you with the imagining.



And what of the relationship between the model and her surroundings?



Let me play a bit with the perspective by changing the foreshortening:



Can you sense the subtle shift in perspective?



Can you sense the intimacy in the second of these shifted perspectives?

Drawing closer to the model and dispensing with her feet changes the intimacy of the *Figurative*. Her two pairs of lips, her mouth and her *source de vie*, are now both slightly offset from the Golden Ratio point and so the aesthetics of this *Figurative* has a *perfect imbalance*, don't you think? This provides the narrative ...

Here is another question for you. In this photograph do you see several sensibilities that make it a *Figurative* and not just a nude?



The photography has cleverly used shadow to almost hide away her *source de vie*. There is a balance between light and dark that is not thrown off by the use of the gold colour. The gold shoes accentuate the foreground giving the piece depth. This is a clever sensibility that you rarely see in photographic art. Have you ever thought of doing artwork with a similar technique?

In one of Matisse's early paintings, his 1903 *Carmelina*, he does a similar thing using red and blue to draw your attention past the model and towards the mirror where the artist sits.



The subtle use of both red and blue provides depth in this painting, where the rest of the painting uses a neutral set of colours set to not clash with the skin tone of his model. Matisse himself stated that he did not just paint things ... “but the relationship between things.”

There are many examples of *Figuratives* which we shall present. As you read this book think in terms of your model and their surroundings and try to compose your work in a complete and balanced fashion. This book is presented in the artistic style of Henri Matisse.

Inspiring Figuratives for Artists is a series of books to help you with your *Figurative* artistic praxis. If you master the *Figurative* ... it is said you can master art. In each *Figurative* in this book search for vanishing points, as well as form and function. And have a little fun with your artistry.

Several Vancouver based models sat for our *Figuratives*. All of our models are in their twenties or older.

This *Inspiring Figuratives for Artists* book is the second in a series of books for artists wanting to expand their artistic praxis brought to you by *Atelier Press*.

“What interests me most is neither still life nor landscapes but the human figure. It is that which best permits me to express my almost religious awe towards life.”

Henri Matisse

Female Figuratives

Julia









Veronique







Genenieve





Patricia





Sylvie



Leslie



Alexandra



Jane



Anne-Marie



Sophie



Sara



Nadya





Catherine





Olivia



Famous Female Figuratives

Clara Bow



Louise Brooks





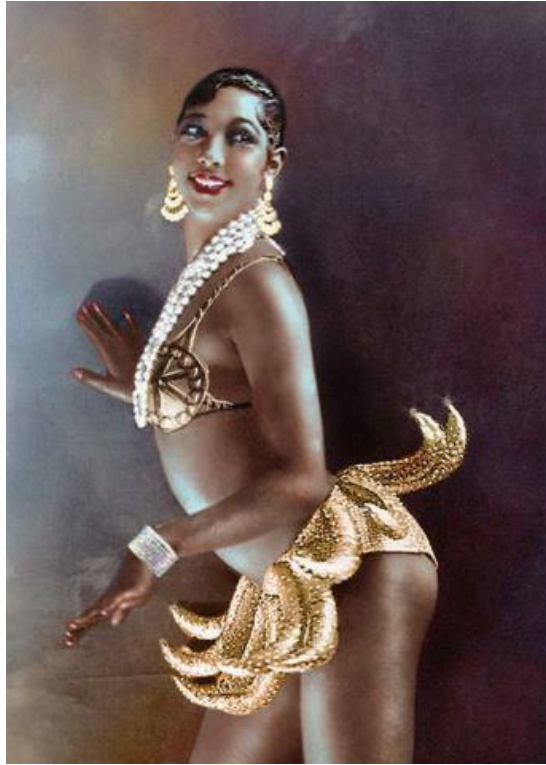
Josephine Baker



















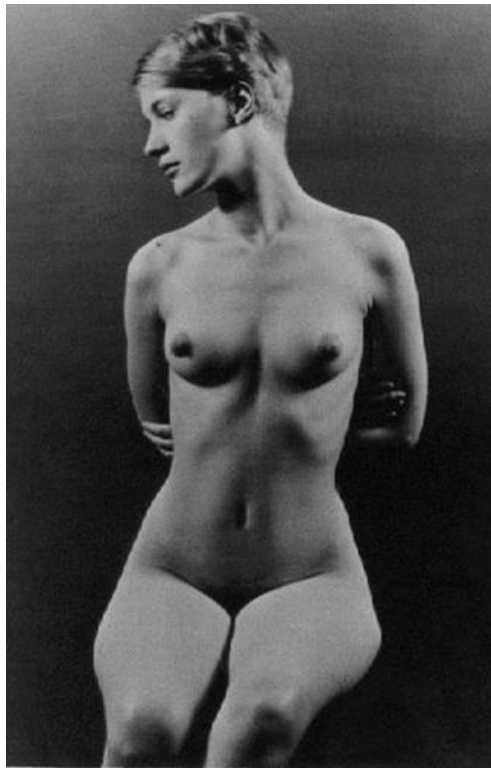






Lee Miller

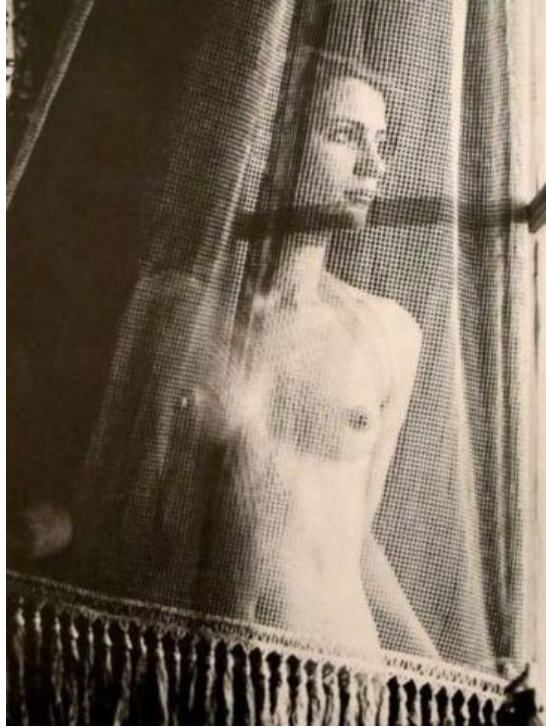






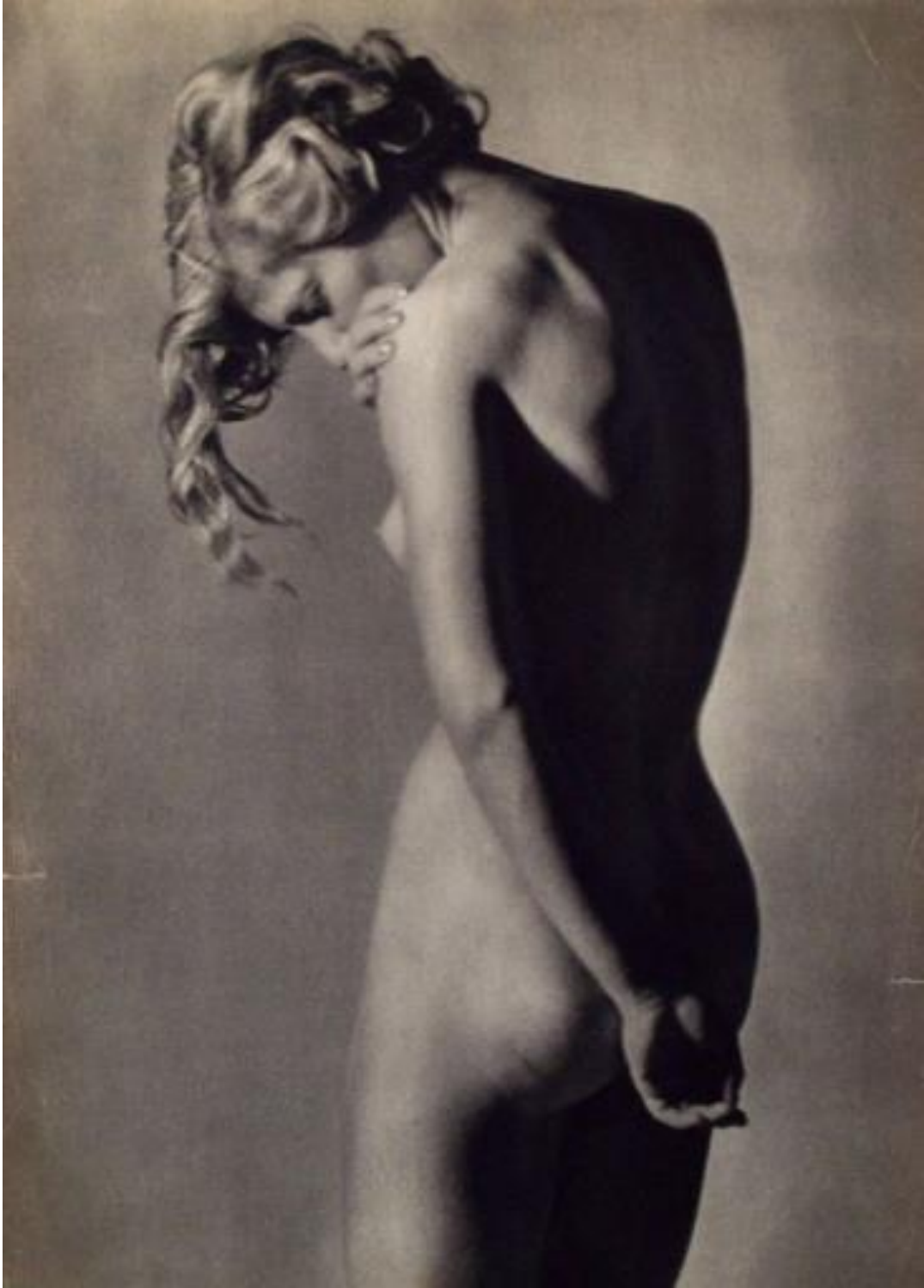












Suzi Wong



Vintage Female Figuratives

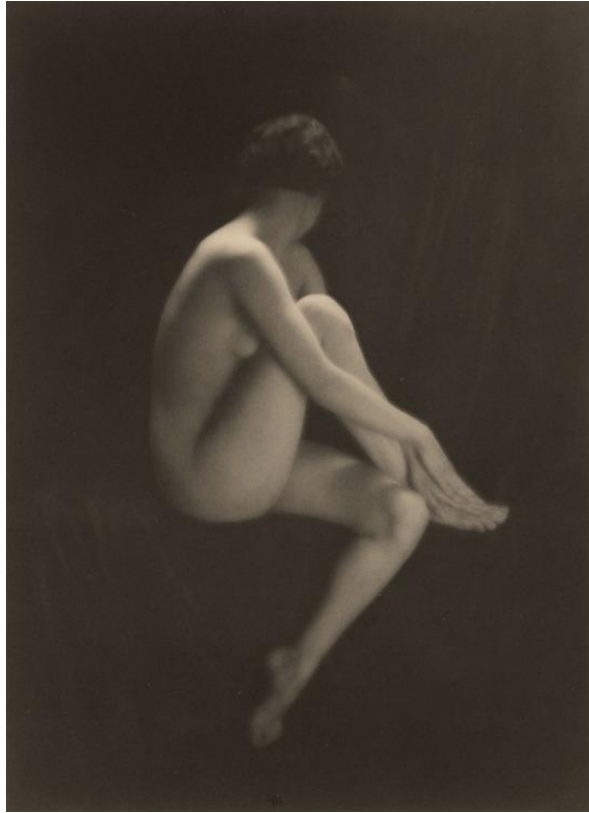
































Compositions







































































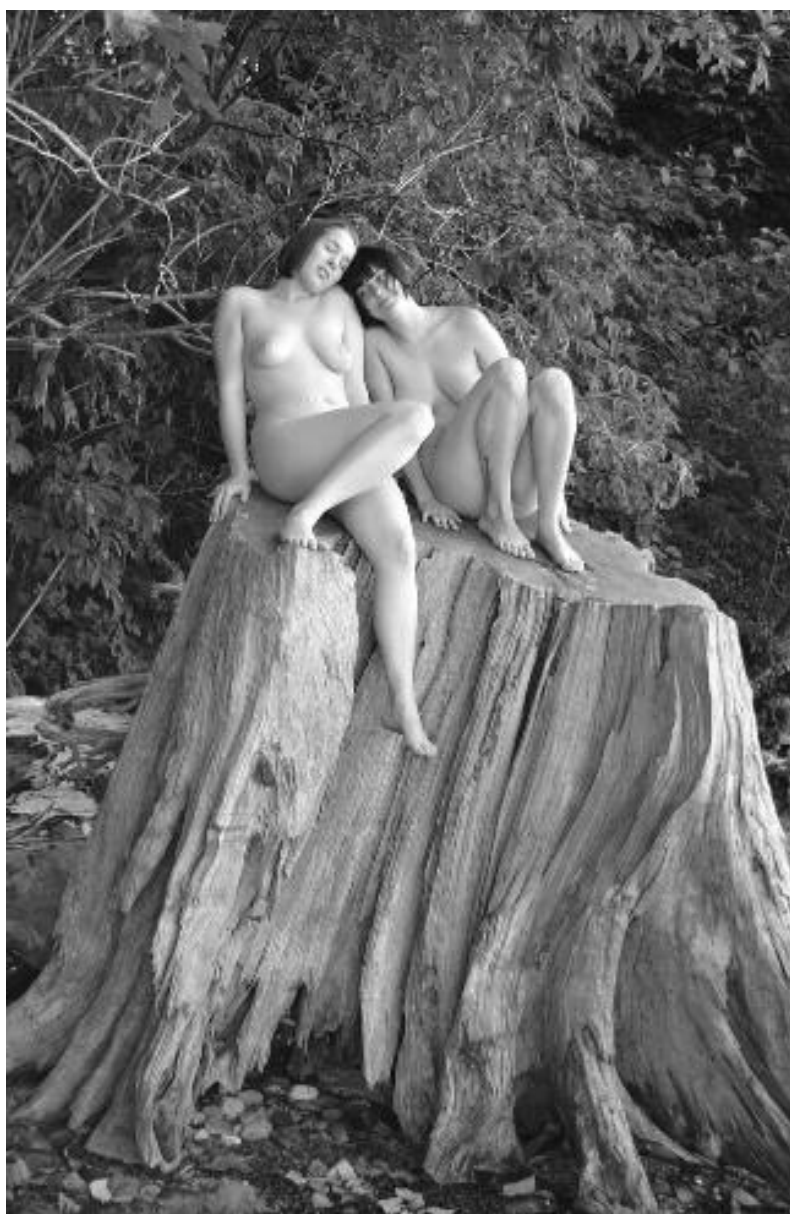












Odalisques























Orientales

Aki







Ayumi

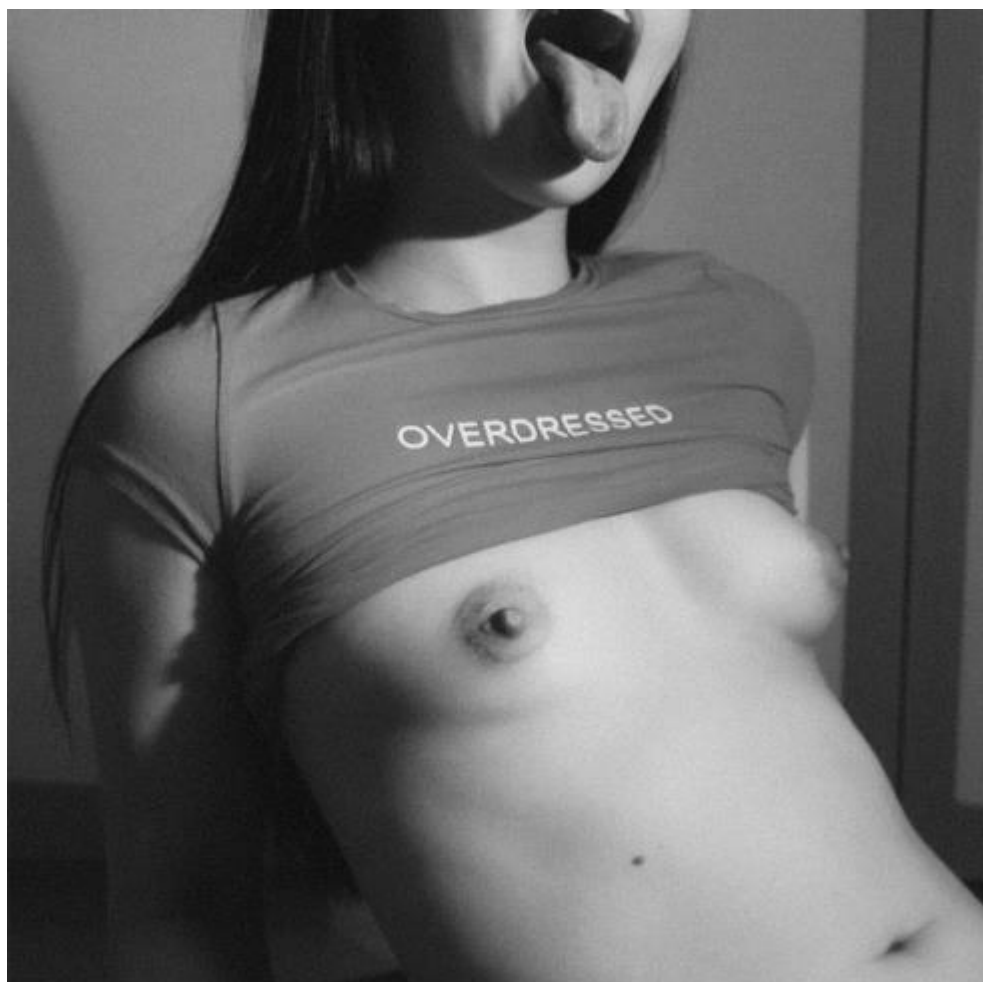




Hanaka



Keiko







Ayaka



Reiko





Ai



Wing Wing





Tattooed Flower (Film)

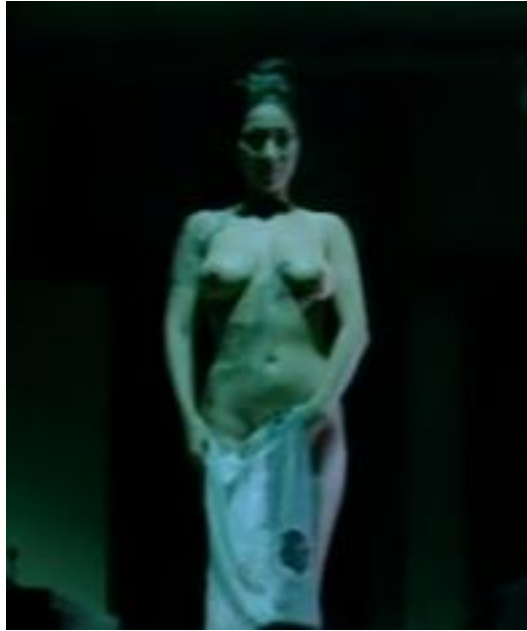




















Suzi



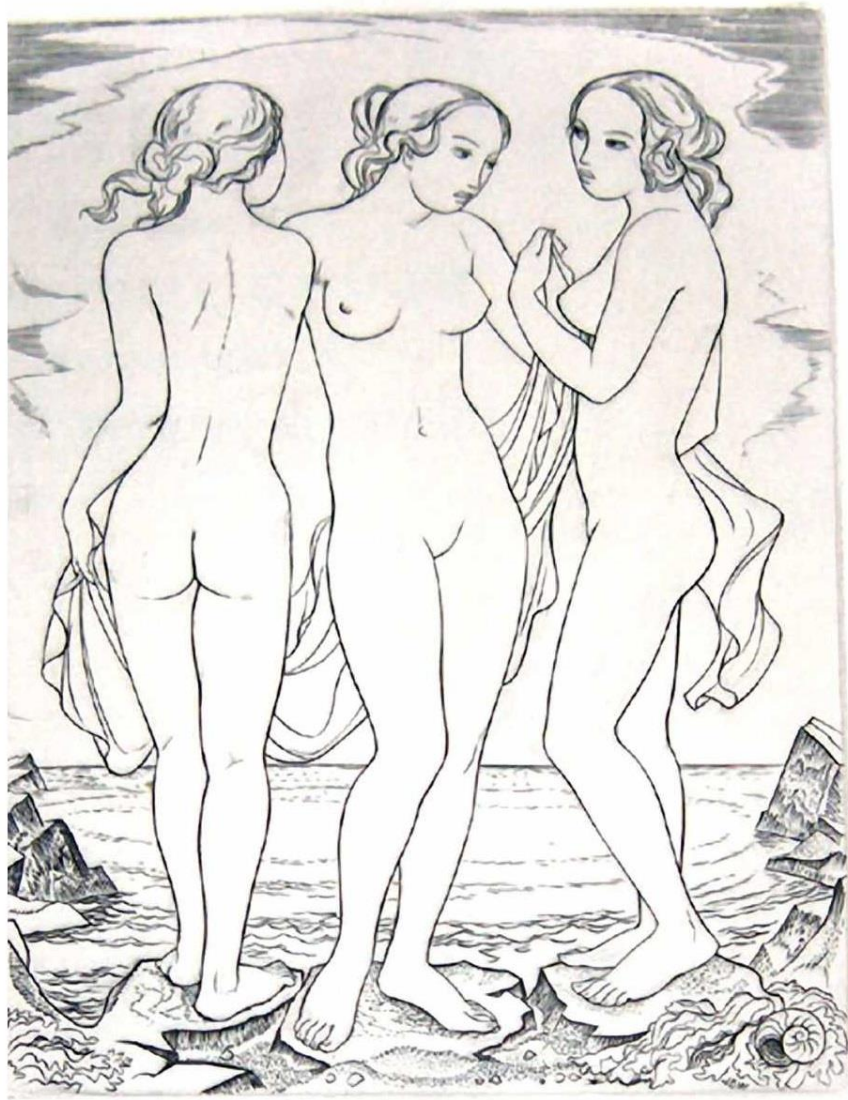
The Three Graces











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